

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete, marked up listing of revised claims with a status identifier in parentheses, underlined text indicating insertions, and strikethrough and/or double-bracketed text indicating deletions.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A fuel-cell separator which is interposed between adjacent ones of a plurality of electrolyte assemblies, each constructed of an electrolyte layer containing an electrolyte medium ~~and as~~sandwiched between two catalytic ~~electrode~~electrodes that are disposed on respective surfaces ~~a surface~~ in a thickness-wise direction of the electrolyte layer, the fuel-cell separator comprising:

a separating section for achieving separation between a fuel gas channel and an oxidizer gas channel; and

a sealing section disposed along an outer periphery of the separator, for preventing leakage of fuel gas and oxidizer gas, the separating section and the sealing section being integrally formed with each other,

wherein a region corresponding to the sealing section is provided with a sealing projection which ~~is formed so as to extend~~extends in parallel with the surface of the electrolyte assembly on which the catalytic electrode is formed, a vertex of which is brought into pressure-contact with the electrolyte assembly under a resilient force,

a sectional profile of the sealing projection perpendicular to a direction in which fuel gas and oxidizer gas flow is U-shaped or V-shaped, [[and]]

the sealing section is formed in a manner such that, when the fuel cell is in a yet-to-be assembled condition, the vertex of the sealing projection extends beyond a

position of contact with the electrolyte assembly in contrast to a case where the fuel cell is in an assembled condition,

wherein the sealing projection has, at least in its area to be contacted by the electrolyte layer, a high polymer elastic layer formed of an elastic body, and wherein the high polymer elastic layer has a width ranging from 1 to 10 mm and a thickness ranging from 1 to 100 µm.

3. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, wherein the separating section and the sealing section are formed integrally with each other by way of plastic deformation processing.

4. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, wherein the fuel-cell separator is constituted by a metal sheet.

5. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, wherein the separating section has a plurality of parallelly arranged U-shaped channels positioned in parallel with the surface of the electrolyte assembly on which the catalytic electrode is formed.

6. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of any claim 2, wherein the separating section and the sealing section are formed by way of press working.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, wherein two or more pieces of the sealing projections are provided, with their vertices abutted against the electrolyte layer, and wherein, given that the location of abutment between the vertex and the electrolyte layer is imaginarily indicated by an abutment line, the two or more abutment lines are arranged in parallel with each other.

10. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, further comprising an auxiliary projection analogous to the sealing projection formed in the region other than the sealing section and the separating section,

wherein the auxiliary projection is disposed in such a way as to make uniform the distribution of contact pressure which occurs between the separator and the electrolyte assembly at the time of assembly of the fuel cell including the separator.

11. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 2, wherein the separating section is formed of a metal sheet, and the metal sheet has its surface coated with a rubber- or synthetic resin-made coating layer.

12. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11, wherein the coating layer exhibits electrical conductivity.

13. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11, wherein the coating layer is so formed as to cover the surface of the metal sheet, with an adherent layer or a surface-treated layer lying therebetween.

14. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 12, wherein in a region of the coating layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high

conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.

15. – 18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 12, wherein the coating layer is so formed as to cover the surface of the metal sheet, with an adherent layer or a surface-treated layer lying therebetween.

20. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11, wherein in a region of the coating layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.

21. (Previously Presented) The fuel-cell separator of claim 13, wherein in a region of the coating layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.

<End of Claims Listing>